



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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ASTORINO DETAILS PROCESS TO EVALUATE "REINVENTING PLAYLAND" PROPOSALS Deadline for submissions is March 10; Citizens group appointed to examine feasibility of plans

With formal proposals for "reinventing Playland for the 21st century" due next week, County Executive Robert P. Astorino today detailed the framework that his administration will use to evaluate the submissions the county receives. As part of the process, he named members to a citizens committee that will assess the feasibility of proposals.

Astorino said the county was now at the second stage of a four-phase process – ideas, feasibility, setting direction and implementation – that will play out over the next several years. Establishing a framework for guiding decisions, he said, was critical to keeping the process on track.

"The outcome we are all looking for is creating a future for Playland that puts the park to its best use for years to come for Westchester County residents," said Astorino. "The framework is designed to accomplish that by establishing a process that is rigorous, objective, open and respectful of all stakeholders."

The formal, detailed submissions for the use of the Long Island Sound property in the City of Rye were solicited through an RFP (request for proposals) and are due March 10. A feasibility assessment will immediately follow, with each proposal evaluated against what are being called the "5 E's."

- **Economics** – Does the proposal offer a financially viable long-term business model?
While the county does not expect to make a profit at the park, the current fiscal situation cannot continue.
- **Environment** – Is the proposal appropriate to local surroundings, area zoning and the environment?
- **Entertainment** – Is the proposal consistent with the purpose of a park?

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- **Experience** – Can the county feel confident about the proposer’s track record with respect to finances, customer service, safety and deadlines?
- **Expectations** – Is the proposal realistic?

To evaluate proposals using the feasibility guidelines, Astorino has appointed a 19-member citizen committee made up of representatives from the city and town of Rye, the county Board of Legislators, business, and real estate, as well environmentalists, park experts and park users. *See list of committee members at end of release.*

“The breadth of stakeholders on the committee will ensure that a broad range of perspectives are part of our feasibility study,” said Jim Chisholm, chairman of the county’s Parks Board, who has been named chairman of the citizens group. “I am excited to be part of this important effort to keep Playland viable for years to come.”

The committee will be responsible for submitting a written report on the feasibility of the proposals that come into the county as part of the RFP. The expectation is that the committee would have its report completed by the end of June, however, this is not a hard deadline should the committee need more time. Assisting the committee will be William Mooney, senior assistant to the county executive, and Peter Tartaglia, deputy commissioner of the Parks department, who will make county resources available as necessary. This could include expertise from the Planning, Law, Budget and other departments. Space will be provided in the County Center for the committee’s meetings.

Once completed, findings from the feasibility study will be incorporated into the RFP selection process. The hope is that the county executive would have enough information to set a direction for moving forward, or not, on the RFP’s by the end of November. The implementation phase, which would include contract negotiations and obtaining all the necessary legal, financial, environmental, local and other approvals, would follow, assuming a decision had been made to move forward on a proposal or combination of proposals. It’s estimated that the implementation phase would take several years to complete.

“This will be a very deliberative process, as it should be,” said Astorino. “We want to make the right decision for Westchester residents.”

This year, Playland will open for the season in May, operating in a similar manner to last season.

(Go to www.ryeplayland.org)

Since 1928, the focal point of the property has been the amusement park, which today has 50 major rides and attractions and covers about 30 acres. The prototype of today’s modern theme parks, Playland was the country’s first totally planned amusement park. Seven of its rides and several of its art deco buildings are designated as National Historic Landmarks.

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Westchester County currently owns and operates the park – one of only a handful of governmental bodies to be in the amusement park business. With attendance steadily dropping over the past five years – from 1 million in 2005 to 494,000 in 2010 – park ownership has translated into greater taxpayer subsidies.

The losses are about \$4 million annually, including both operating losses and debt.

The RFP covers approximately 100 acres of the larger 280-acre Playland property. A critical feature is that its focus goes beyond the historic amusement park. Scenic vistas and a beautiful beach on Long Island Sound, an Olympic-size swimming pool, an extensive waterfront boardwalk, fishing piers, boating lake, dining and picnic areas, a proposed children's museum, and an indoor ice skating rink, as well as the amusement park, can all be utilized, or not, in the plans submitted by developers.

Under the RFP process, the county is not obligated to accept any of the plans proposed.

Members of the Playland Citizens Committee:

Rye:

Doug French, Mayor of Rye City

Joe Carvin, Rye Town Supervisor

Charles Dorn, Chairman of the Playland Strategic Planning Committee for Rye

Board of Legislators:

Bill Ryan, Chairman of Public Works, Labor, Transportation and Parks

Judy Myers, Legislator

Sheila Marcotte, Legislator

Parks Community:

Jim Chisholm, Parks Board Chairman who will chair the Citizens Committee

David Swope, Chairman of Jacob Burns Film Center; Teatown Reservation Trustee

Liz Bracken-Thompson, Chairman of Friends of Parks

Business Community:

Richard French, President of Regional News Network; Representative from Westchester County Association

Ellen Lynch, Representative from the Business Council of Westchester

John Peckham, President of Peckham Industries; Arts Westchester, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Business/Amusement/ Entertainment:

Scott Bernstein, former Amusement/Entertainment Executive, Bedford resident

Jim Dannhauser, former Six Flags CFO, Bronxville resident

Natasha Caputo, Entertainment/Tourism Consultant, Mt. Kisco resident

Business/Real Estate:

Jim Houlihan, Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC; former Board Member of Friends of Parks

Other:

Caleb Gilligan-Evans, Junior at Stepinac High School, Yonkers resident

Father Richard Alejunas, S.D.B., Chairman of the Westchester Youth Advisory Board, Don Bosco Community

Center of Port Chester

Law

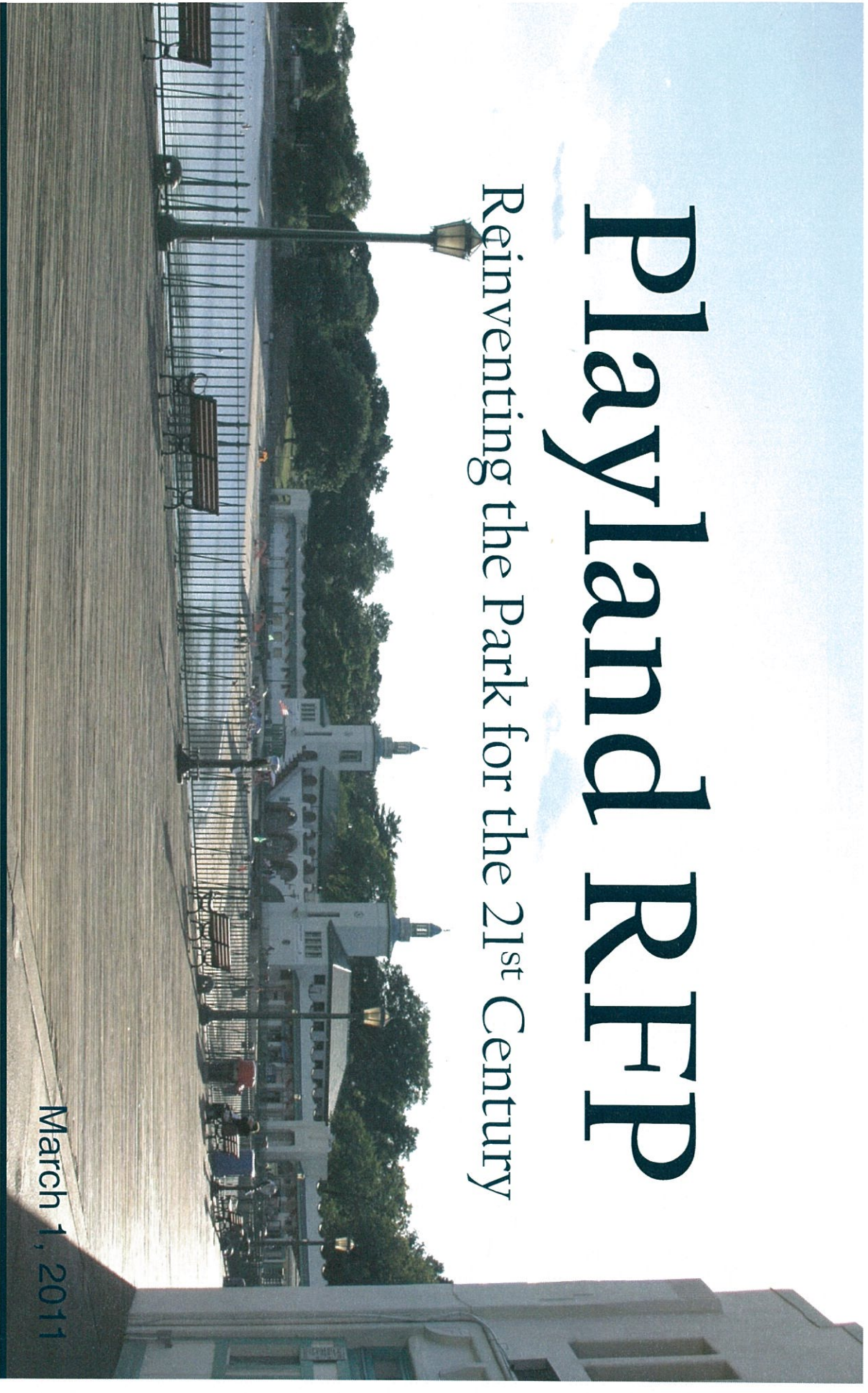
Evan Inlaw, Attorney, Yonkers resident

Playland RFP

Reinventing the Park for the 21st Century

March 1, 2011

Westchester
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The Problem to Be Solved



Playland is one of the crown jewels in Westchester's parks system



But the park's multi-million dollar annual losses can no longer be sustained

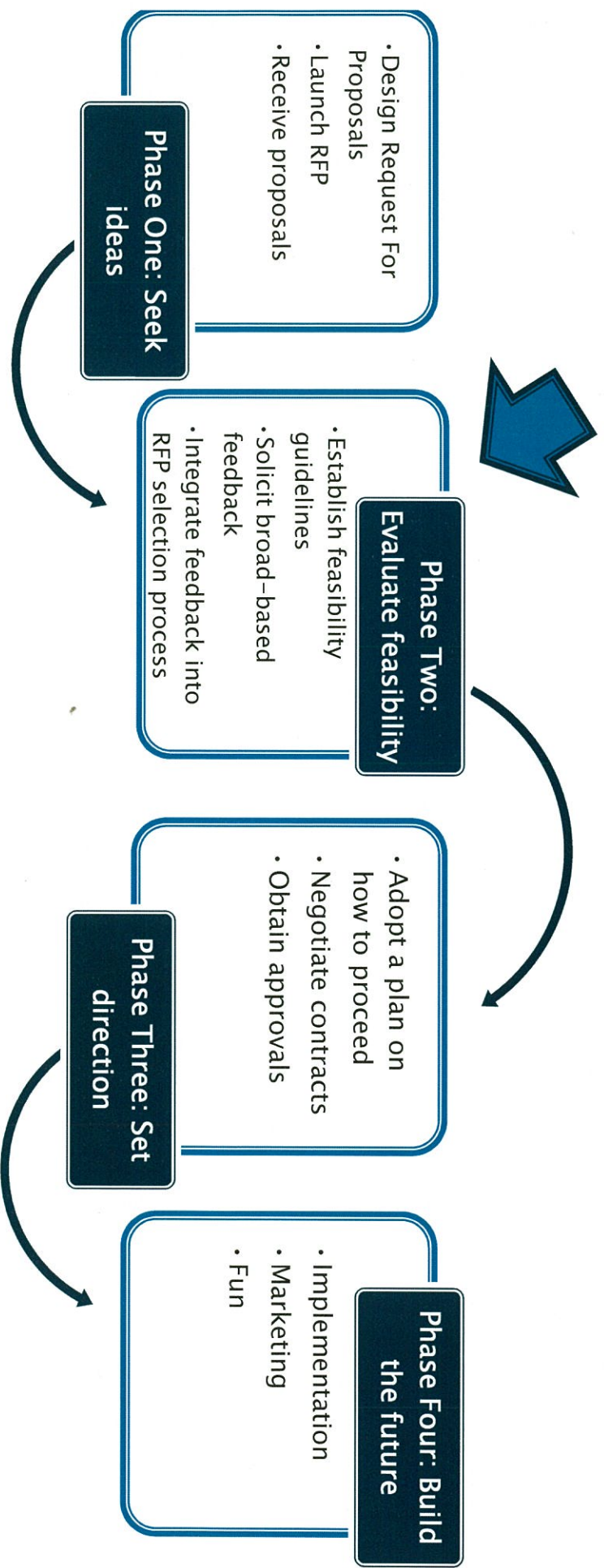


The challenge ahead is to find a new model that ensures the park's long-term viability

Course of Action

Four-phase, 12-step, multi-year process

Where we are now



Phase One: Seek Ideas

- 1. Design Request for Proposals – wide range of ideas encouraged; a “blank slate”**
- 2. Launch RFP – submissions sought on Aug. 27, 2010**
- 3. Receive proposals – deadline for submissions is March 10, 2011**



Phase Two: Evaluate Feasibility

4. Establish feasibility guidelines
5. Solicit views from stakeholders
6. Integrate the feedback into RFP selection process



Feasibility Guidelines

Grade proposals against the 5 E's

- ▶ **Economics** – financially viable long-term business model
- ▶ **Environment** – appropriate to local surroundings
- ▶ **Entertainment** – consistent with mission of a park
- ▶ **Experience** – confidence in proposer's track record
- ▶ **Expectations** – realistic chance of completion



View of stakeholders

Set up citizens committee

- ▶ **19 members representing a full range of stakeholders**
 - Mission to evaluate each proposal against the 5 E's
- ▶ **Appoint staff to support committee**
 - William Mooney, senior assistant to County Executive
 - Peter Tartaglia, deputy commissioner of Parks
- ▶ **Capture findings in a feasibility assessment**
 - Written report due in 90 days (June 25)



List of Committee Members

Rye:

Doug French, Mayor of Rye City

Joe Carvin, Rye Town Supervisor

Charles Dorn, Chairman of the Playland Strategic Planning Committee for Rye

Board of Legislators:

Bill Ryan, Chairman of Public Works, Labor, Transportation and Parks

Judy Myers, Legislator

Sheila Marcotte, Legislator

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Father Richard Alejunas, S.D.B., Chairman of the Westchester Youth Advisory Board, Don Bosco Community Center of Port Chester

Law

Evan Inlaw, Attorney, Yonkers resident



Integrate feedback into RFP

County staff develops list of options that:

- Incorporate community feedback
- Adhere to legal requirements of the RFP process
- Balance all interests fairly and objectively

List of options to CE by Sept. 25, 2011



Phase Three: Set Direction

7. Adopt a plan on how to proceed

Choose among potential options

- Accept a single proposal / multiple proposals
- Combine aspects of different proposals
- Ask for improvements/refinements of proposals
- Reject all proposals and go back to drawing board

Make determination

- Expectation is to adopt a course of action within 60 days of receipt of options (Sept. 26 to Nov. 25)



Phase Three: Set Direction

8. Negotiate necessary contracts

(Steps 8 and 9 are tied together)

9. Obtain all necessary approvals

- Legal
- Legislative
- Environmental/ Local
- Financial

Time frames will depend on proposals – minimum of six months to a year



Phase Four: Build the Future

10. Implementation

11. Marketing

12. FUN

Time frames will depend on progress in Phase Three



Next Steps

- ▶ **Await RFP submissions on March 10**
- ▶ **The Web site has all information available
(westchestergov.com/rfp)**
- ▶ **Playland will be open this summer**
- ▶ **Questions**



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